

Blaxhall Village Newsletter



Spring 2023

Coronation Competition



As you know, I'm not one to whine about the weather, but for the most part spring has been a damp squib this year. Still, Blaxhall battles on, and despite a rather chilly, overcast day, the Coronation Monday event proved a great success, including a lively boules contest. We have more on that inside, as well as more on the upcoming Summer Ball and Festival.



Should the weather continue to scowl at us, readers will be excited to learn that the last few years' newsletters are now available online, so you can curl up with a mug of hot chocolate and enjoy me complaining about the climate three years ago!

Page 2 Church News

Page 3 The Ship

Page 4 Council News

Page 5 History

Page 6 This & That

Page 7 More This & That!

Page 8 BPC Information



What's going on up the Church?

Well, any Blaxhall folk who venture in the direction of Stone Common may have noticed Ray Scopes or Joy Shaw at work in the churchyard; a sure sign that St Peter's Festival is on the horizon (more of that anon). And those of us who attended the BCOST AGM, where I grabbed the opportunity to hand out the re-vamped "FRIENDS OF BLAXHALL CHURCH" leaflets, will realise that I'm on a mission. And no, not a religious one, it's a UNIFICATION mission in which all the little groups (BCOST, PCC, Playing Field/Village Hall committee, Parish Council and allotments) all pull together for the common good. To be honest, it already happens to a certain extent when the PFc put up tents for the PCC and the PCC serve teas for the VH etc. But I have a dream (Uh-oh! Do I hear you say?!) that we pool our resources and help each other out on a more regular basis. If we follow the example of the indomitable Joy Shaw, we could go to a committee meeting almost every week of the year!

The sharp-eared amongst you will have heard me mention the fact that I need more heathens on the PCC. And the sharp-witted will realise that I'm simply alluding to us all; the derivation of "heathen" being probably "heath dweller"; and I, for one, am proud to live near Blaxhall Heath! The re-launch of FRIENDS OF BLAXHALL CHURCH is an invitation to all of us Blaxhall heathens to support the church building, notwithstanding our religious leanings. Thanks to one or two generous donations we have already been able to fund an in-depth survey of the church tower (see display in VH over the festival weekend for more information) to ascertain the extent of the damage and ask specialist builders to tender for its repair. Now we must keep our fingers crossed that our application for National Heritage Lottery Funding bears fruit.

Now for THE FESTIVAL! The Feast of St Peter is actually on 29th June, but we choose the nearest (and most convenient) weekend for our Blaxhall celebration. The wonderful flower arrangers will be choosing a poem to illustrate florally and there will be live music and even livelier games and quizzes in and outside the Church. Please feel free to bring your favourite poem to read to us, and you might win yourself a piece of cake from the wonderful catering tent. All this year's displays will go into the Village Hall: history, Church Tower survey, BCOST, and more. We are also taking bookings for tables if local crafters or artists would like to display and sell their art and designs. So, here are some dates for your diary:

24th and 25th June...St Peter's Festival

12th August...Blaxhall Fete

10th September....Harvest Festival

17th December...Carol Service



Election

District and Parish Council elections took place earlier in May but as we had less candidates than we have for our requisite number of Parish Councillors, all who stood were automatically approved for the Parish Council. The six previous councillors all stood again and we have one addition, namely Graham Atkinson who is a welcome addition. Graham has lived in the village for four years and has been a great help with a number of village events and with the Village Hall, especially with the boules piste and I am sure he will prove a valuable addition to the council.

We have a new District Councillor and look forward to meeting him at the next meeting. Ray Herring has been our District Councillor for many years and we thank him for his generosity to Blaxhall through his locality budget and regular support. We wish him well for the future.

Coronation

There was a really good turn out for our playing field event. There was no charge the suburb Blaxhall tea, just donations. People were very generous and the contributions went a long way to paying for our new gazebos which you will see at future village events. Thank you everyone.

Village Hall

During Covid the Village Hall was not used and was closed up for a long time. The lack of ventilation has resulted in an attack of mould over most of the ceiling and much of the walls. We have had a specialist cleaning company do a complete clean, removing all of the mould. The windows have also had a proper clean inside and out and what a difference it has made. All looking good for the Summer Ball and other summer events.

Summer Ball

By popular demand we are reviving the Summer Ball. Before Covid this was a lovely social event, bringing people together to enjoy eating, drinking and dancing in the warmth of summer (hopefully). We have been fortunate to book "The Remoras" a good humoured, lively band playing great music for dancing that I'm sure everyone will enjoy. We will be putting on a full buffet with food for all tastes all included in the bargain price of £16 a head. There is a licensed bar (cash only) and the ever popular raffle. Tickets are selling fast and the numbers have to be limited so don't miss out. Phone me 688192 or Joy 688309 To reserve your place by Sunday 11th June to avoid disappointment. Dress is purely optional but why not make an occasion of it.

**BLAXHALL FETE
SAVE THE DATE - 12 AUGUST**

The Ship



News of the Blaxhall Ship Inn, May 2023



premises will continue to be renowned as a venue for music and performance. The galley will be producing Good Value Home Cooking (plenty at modest prices) available seven days a week. The eight ensuite rooms are proving increasingly popular and a valuable asset in a financial climate where pubs and village inn's in particular, are closing at a rate of many a day.

I would like to thank those who have supported the Ship behind the bar, in the galley, servicing the letting rooms, cleaning, repairing our heating, fixing the electrics and coping with the cellar; all these have been done despite the distractions. Lastly; I would like to thank the many people who support the old Ship by using it: Please continue and bring your friends!

Terry Davey

Since the last news was published the old Ship has weathered many a 'lee shore' including mutiny and desertion. Some of the crew have even walked the plank! But the press gang has been out and the new crew, under the Captaincy of Sean Cropp, have the old Ship back on a steady course.

The long suffering owner is pleased to see that the ethos of freedom and good fellowship will be maintained and the

Blaxhall Summer Ball

Saturday 17th June at 7:30pm
in the Village Hall

**Dancing to
The Remoras**

Tickets £16 - Includes
spiffing buffet supper
Licensed Bar (cash only)

Tickets in advance only, by 11 June
from Graham 688192 or Joy 688309

An illustration of a man and a woman dancing.

I'm feeling a little nostalgic today, so decided a few pics around Stone Common are called for. Some readers may have seen some of them before in our archive books or exhibitions, but hopefully they'll be new to most of you.

The first, possibly of Ada Mannall, is taken down "The Walk", behind Stone Common, around 1900. The track has a hard surface now, but was deep, loose sand up until a few years ago, as anyone who ever cycled up it will painfully remember! Next up, Frank Ling, on the field in front of the Common, around 1930. Frank, horses and hat are all long gone, but I'll always remember him as an old man in the 1980s, watching ITV wrestling on a Saturday afternoon, grasping the arms of the chair and rattling it from side to side as he lived every blow with Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy.



Below, the view looking down Rectory Road in spring 1940. A very young Mollie Mayhew would have been blissfully unaware of the turmoil now engulfing the continent, though even remote Blaxhall would not escape unscathed.

Finally, Walter Skeet and family, 1940s. When not busy standing in for Jimmy Nail, Walter and wife, Sarah, busied themselves raising rabbits, ducks and chickens on the allotments. The warren of interconnecting runs was something to behold, sprawling over a vast area and capable of losing the unwary visitor far more effectively than any maze!



The poster features a large, bold title "Blaxhall Festival" at the top. Below it, the dates "24 & 25 June" and time "11am - 5pm" are prominently displayed. The central theme is "Poems", written in a stylized blue font. Below this, a list of activities includes "Flower Displays, Live Music, Children's Games, Plant Stall, Face Painting, Churchyard Safari, Quiz, and more!". A "PLUS" section lists "Arts & Crafts in the Village Hall". The background is a faded photograph of a churchyard scene, with several people visible in the foreground. Overlaid on the image are various lines of poetry from classic English literature, such as "Long fields of barley nod at eve, That catch the wold and meet the sky", "If you can keep your head when all about you", and "Tyger Tyger, burning bright, In the forests of the night".

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust

Since our last item in the newsletter back in December we have had a busy winter and spring, managing and enhancing the habitat at both Jasper's Pightle and Stone Common.

At Stone Common, work parties over Christmas and the New Year planted hedging along the southern boundary of the land with the help and guidance of Blaxhall Tree Warden, Joy Shaw. Other work has included making a start on clearing rubbish from the site, clearing encroaching alexanders from along the pathways and putting up bird nesting boxes. Oak signs have been erected identifying 'Prevost's Path', named after the donor of the land.



Meanwhile at Jasper's Pightle (for those who don't know it, this is the piece of grassland adjoining Blaxhall Heath which runs along the north side of the B1069 Tunstall to Snape road) in February we completed hedging-planting along the roadside with the help of financial aid and volunteers from the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB [picture left], and work parties have been engaged in removing redundant barbed wire fencing and in mulching the newly-planted hedging using rotted-down bracken cuttings from the site.

Although the bracken is just beginning to appear again on the Pightle, and further cuts will be required again this year after the bird-nesting season is over, its regrowth is now sparse, and it is good to see that the acid grassland habitat, where it has been cut and raked twice-yearly in line with our Management Plan for three years now, is recovering really well, showing a dense sward of mixed grasses studded with sheep's sorrel, forget-me-knot, vetch, stitchwort, speedwell, viper's bugloss and a rich variety of other wild flowers.

We also held our regular twice-yearly litter pick around the village in March.

We are always keen to recruit new volunteers to join our work parties or get involved in any other way you are able. If you are interested, please contact our Hon Secretary, Eve Rossor at everrossor@gmail.com. Or for news of our activities, and to see minutes of our meetings, visit our website: <https://blaxhallcommons.com>.





Our Coronation Do

Blaxhall celebrated the coronation of King Charles III with a tea party and games on the playing field. A fabulous Blaxhall tea was provided and a fun game of cricket was played. The new Boules piste was in great demand with many people having a go for the first time. It was another super village event and the atmosphere was wonderful. Although the weather was a little cool the rain held off and a lovely time was had by all.

Meanwhile, Keeble's Corner once again lived up to its ever-growing reputation for topical 'bale art', with King Charles III brilliantly depicted, right down to ears formed from crushed, tyres, suitably sprayed pink.



Blaxhall Play Readings

The group has moved on from strength to strength, reading a hugely diverse selection of plays. Last month was Alan Ayckbourn's "Bedroom Farce"....great fun and a lot of laughs! Before that was Arcadia by Tom Stoppard...a very different beast, exploring past and present, order and disorder, a deeply thought provoking play.

All the plays are very different, and every member appreciates different angles from each one. We meet on the last Thursday of the month at 7pm in Blaxhall. For more information contact Maggi on magsnordic@gmail.com



Former Stone Common resident, Ann Chapman, captured this heard of visitors near one of the reservoirs recently.

Newsletters Online

As mentioned on the front page, some of our old newsletters are now available online. The last 16 editions can now be found by visiting issuu.com/blaxhall. I'll have a rummage for any earlier examples, but don't hold your breath, as I fear they may no longer be with us.



Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 885215	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 688003	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)	Graham Atkinson	

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Tim Wilson 07823 587947 tim.wilson@east-suffolk.gov.uk
Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk
Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2023 dates are: **Wednesday 4th January, Wednesday 8th March, Wednesday 3rd May, Wednesday 5th July, Wednesday 6th September and Wednesday 1st November.**

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938** The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri. You can book a pick-up with “Katch” bus service by using the app, or by phoning **01728 554455**.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org
For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley 01728 687507

The **Mobile Library** comes to Blaxhall, and stops at **The Youth Hostel 9.35 – 10am** calling every 4 weeks on Wednesdays: the remaining 2023 dates are; **31 May, 28 June, 26 July, 23 August, 20 September, 18 October, 15 November, 13 December**

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge.
Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson on help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, visit the website <http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192
To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 688205

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916,
Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com

Tree Warden - Joy Shaw, joyjoyshaw@gmail.com, 01728 688309

Deadline for next Newsletter - 15th August